

# LEIGH HUNT'S LONDON JOURNAL.

TO ASSIST THE INQUIRING, ANIMATE THE STRUGGLING, AND SYMPATHIZE WITH ALL.

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## THE EVE OF ST AGNES.

THE reader should give us three pearls, instead of three half-pence, for this number of our Journal, for it presents him with the whole of Mr Keats's beautiful poem, entitled as above,—to say nothing of our loving commentary. We promised, some time ago, in giving quotations from Thomson's 'Castle of Indolence,' to read a small poem occasionally with the reader, after this fashion. Correspondents have more than once reminded us of the promise: we never lost sight of it, and here we redeem it; as we hope we often shall.

To-day is the Eve of St Agnes; and we thought we could not take a better opportunity of increasing the public acquaintance with this exquisite production, which is founded on the popular superstition connected with the day. St Agnes was a Roman virgin, who suffered martyrdom in the reign of Dioclesian. Her parents, a few days after her decease, are said to have had a vision of her, surrounded by angels, and attended by a white lamb, which afterwards became sacred to her. In the Catholic church formerly the nuns used to bring a couple of lambs to her altar during mass. The superstition is (for we believe it is still to be found) that by taking certain measures of divination, damsels may get a sight of their future husbands in a dream. The ordinary process seems to have been by fasting. Aubrey (as quoted in 'Brand's Popular Antiquities') mentions another, which is, to take a row of pins, and pull them out one by one, saying a Pater-noster; after which, upon going to bed, the dream is sure to ensue. Brand quotes Ben Jonson:—

"And on sweet St Agnes' night,  
Please you with the promis'd sight—  
Some of husbands, some of lovers,  
Which an empty dream discovers."

But another poet has now taken up the creed in good poetic earnest; and if the superstition should go out in every other respect, in his rich and loving pages it will live for ever.

## THE EVE OF ST AGNES.

BY JOHN KEATS.

I.

ST AGNES' EVE—Ah! bitter chill it was;  
The owl, for all his feathers, was a-cold;  
The hare limp'd trembling through the frozen grass,

And silent was the flock in woolly fold;  
Numb were the beadsman's fingers while he told  
His rosary, and while his frosted breath,  
Like pious incense, from a censer old,  
Seem'd taking flight for heaven without a death,  
Past the sweet Virgin's picture, while his prayer  
he saith.

What a complete feeling of winter-time is here, together with an intimation of those Catholic elegancies, of which we are to have more in the poem!

"The owl, with all his feathers, was a-cold."

Could he have selected an image more warm and comfortable in itself, and, therefore, better contradicted by the season? We feel the plump, feathery bird in his nook, shivering in spite of his natural household warmth, and staring out at the strange weather. The hare cringing through the chill grass

is very piteous, and the "silent flock" very patient; and how quiet and gentle, as well as wintery, are all these circumstances, and fit to open a quiet and gentle poem! The breath of the pilgrim, likened to "pious incense," completes them, and is a simile in admirable "keeping," as the painters call it; that is to say, is thoroughly harmonious in itself and with all that is going on. The breath of the pilgrim is visible, so is that of a censer; his object is religious, and so is the use of the censer; the censer, after its fashion, may be said to pray, and its breath, like the pilgrim's, ascends to heaven. Young students of poetry may, in this image alone, see what imagination is, under one of its most poetical forms, and how thoroughly it "tells." There is no part of it unfitting. It is not applicable in one point, and the reverse in another.

II.

His prayer he saith, this patient, holy man,  
Then takes his lamp, and riseth from his knees,  
And back returneth, meagre, barefoot, wan,  
Along the chapel aisle by slow degrees:  
The sculptured dead on each side seemed to freeze,  
Imprisoned in black purgatorial rails:  
Knights, ladies, praying in dumb orat'ries,  
He passeth by; and his weak spirit fails  
To think how they may ache in icy hoods and mails.

The germ of this thought, or something like it, is in Dante, where he speaks of the figures that perform the part of sustaining columns in architecture. Keats had read Dante in Mr Carey's translation, for which he had a great respect. He began to read him afterwards in Italian, which language he was mastering with surprising quickness. A friend of ours has a copy of Ariosto, containing admiring marks of his pen. But the same thought may have originally struck one poet as well as another. Perhaps there are few that have not felt something like it in seeing the figures upon tombs. Here, however, for the first time, we believe, in English poetry, is it expressed, and with what feeling and elegance! Most wintery as well as penitential is the word "aching," in "icy hoods and mails;" and most felicitous the introduction of the Catholic idea in the word "purgatorial." The very colour of the rails is made to assume a meaning, and to shadow forth the gloom of the punishment—

"Imprisoned in black purgatorial rails."

III.

Northward he turneth through a little door,  
And scarce three steps, ere music's golden tongue  
Flattered to tears this aged man and poor;  
But no; already had his death-bell rung:  
The joys of all his life were said and sung:  
His was harsh penance on St Agnes' Eve:  
Another way he went, and soon among  
Rough ashes sat he, for his soul's reprieve;  
And all night kept awake, for sinners' sake to grieve.

"Flatter'd to tears this aged man and poor."

This "flattered" is exquisite. A true poet is by nature a metaphysician; far greater in general than metaphysicians professed. He feels instinctively what the others get at by long searching. In this word "flattered" is the whole theory of the secret of tears; which are the tributes, more or less worthy, of self-

pity to self-love. Whenever we shed tears, we take pity on ourselves; and we feel, if we do not consciously say so, that we deserve to have the pity taken. In many cases, the pity is just, and the self-love not to be construed unhandsomely. In many others, it is the reverse; and this is the reason why selfish people are so often found among the tear-shedders, and why they seem even to shed them for others. They imagine themselves in the situation of the others, as indeed the most generous must, before they can sympathize; but the generous console as well as weep. Selfish tears are avaricious of everything but themselves.

"Flatter'd to tears." Yes, the poor old man was moved, by the sweet music, to think that so sweet a thing was intended for his comfort as well as for others. He felt that the mysterious kindness of heaven did not omit even his poor, old, sorry case, in its numerous workings and visitations; and, as he wished to live longer, he began to think that his wish was to be attended to. He began to consider how much he had suffered—how much he had suffered wrongly or mysteriously—and how much better a man he was, with all his sins, than fate seemed to have taken him for. Hence, he found himself deserving of tears and self-pity, and he shed them, and felt soothed by his poor, old, loving self. Not undeservedly either; for he was a pains-taking pilgrim, aged, patient, and humble, and willingly suffered cold and toil, for the sake of something better than he could otherwise deserve; and so the pity is not exclusively on his own side: we pity him too, and would fain see him well out of that cold chapel, gathered into a warmer place than a grave. But it was not to be. We must, therefore, console ourselves with knowing, that this icy endurance of his was the last, and that he soon found himself at the sunny gate of heaven.

IV.

That ancient beadsman heard the prelude soft,  
And so it chanced (for many a door was wide  
From hurry to and fro) soon up aloft  
The silver snarling trumpets 'gan to chide;  
The level chambers, ready with their pride,  
Were glowing to receive a thousand guests;  
The carved angels, ever eager-eyed,  
Stared, where upon their heads the cornice rests,  
With hair blown back, and wings put cross-wise on  
their breasts.

V.

At length burst in the argent revelry,  
With plume, tiara, and all rich array,  
Numerous as shadows haunting fairily  
The brain, new stuff'd, in youth, with triumphs gay  
Of old romance. These let us wish away,  
And turn, sole-thoughted, to one Lady there,  
Whose heart had brooded, all that wintry day,  
On love, and wing'd St Agnes' saintly care,  
As she had heard old dames full many times de-  
clare.

VI.

They told her how, upon St Agnes' Eve,  
Young virgins might have visions of delight;  
And soft adornings from their loves receive  
Upon the honey'd middle of the night,  
If ceremonies due they did aright;

As, supperless to bed they must retire  
And couch supine their beauties, lily white;  
Nor look behind, nor sideways, but require  
Of heaven with upward eyes for all that they desire.

## VII.

Full of this whim was thoughtful Madeline;  
*The music, yearning like a god in pain,*  
She scarcely heard; her maiden eyes divine  
Fix'd on the floor, saw many a sweeping train  
Pass by—she headed not at all; in vain  
Came many a tiptoe, amorous cavalier,  
And back retired; not cool'd by high disdain;  
But she saw not; her heart was elsewhere;  
She sigh'd for Agnes' dreams, the sweetest of the year.

## VIII.

She danced along with vague, regardless eyes,  
Anxious her lips, her breathing quick and short;  
The hallowed hour was near at hand; she sighs.  
Amid the timbrels, and the thronged resort  
Of whisperers, in anger or in sport;  
Mid looks of love, defiance, hate, and scorn;  
*Hood-winked with fairy fancy;* all amorn,  
Save to St Agnes and her lambs unshorn,  
And all the bliss to be before to-morrow morn.

## IX.

So, purposing each moment to retire,  
She lingered still. Meantime, across the moors,  
Had come young Porphyro, with heart on fire  
For Madeline. Beside the portal doors,  
Buttress'd from moonlight, stands he, and implores  
All saints to give him sight of Madeline,  
But for one moment in the tedious hours,  
That he might gaze, and worship all unseen,  
Perchance speak, kneel, touch, kiss—in sooth such things have been.

## X.

He ventures in; let no buzz'd whisper tell;  
All eyes be muffled, or a hundred swords  
Will storm his heart, Love's fev'rous citadel.  
For him those chambers held barbarian hordes,  
Hyena foemen, and hot-blooded lords,  
Whose very dogs would execrations howl  
Against his lineage. Not one breast affords  
Him any mercy, in that mansion foul,  
Save one old beldame weak in body and in soul.

## XI.

Ah, happy chance! the aged creature came  
Shuffling along with ivory-headed wand,  
To where he stood, hid from the torches' flame,  
Behind a broad hall-pillar, far beyond  
The sound of merriment and chorus bland.  
He startled her; but soon she knew his face,  
And grasp'd his fingers in her palsied hand:  
Saying, "Merrey, Porphyro! hie thee from this place;  
They are all here to-night, the whole blood-thirsty race.

## XII.

"Get hence! Get hence! there's dwarfish Hildebrand,  
He had a fever late, and in the fit  
He cursed thee and thine, both house and land:  
Then there's that old Lord Maurice, not a whit  
More tame for his grey hairs—Alas, me! flit;  
Flit like a ghost away."—"Ah, gossip dear,  
We're safe enough; here in this arm-chair sit,  
And tell me how—"—"Good Saints! not here!  
not here!  
Follow me, child, or else these stones will be thy bier."

## XIII.

He followed through a lowly, arched way,  
Brushing the cobwebs with his lofty plume;  
And as she mutter'd "Well-a—well-a-day!"  
He found him in a little moonlight-room,  
Pale, latticed, chill, and silent as a tomb.

"Now tell me where is Madeline," said he,  
"Oh, tell me, Angela, by the holy loom  
Which none but secret Sisterhood may see,  
When they St Agnes' wool are weaving piously."

The poet does not make his "little moonlight room" comfortable, observe. The high taste of the exordium is kept up. All is still wintery. There is to be no comfort in the poem but what is given by love. All else may be willingly left to the cold walls.

## XIV.

"St Agnes! Ah! it is St Agnes' Eve—  
Yet men will murder upon holy days;  
Thou must hold water in a witch's sieve,  
And be the liege-lord of all elves and fays  
To venture so: it fills me with amaze  
To see thee, Porphyro!—St Agnes' Eve!  
God's help! my lady fair the conjurer plays  
This very night: good angels her deceive!  
But let me laugh awhile; I've mickle time to grieve."

## XV.

*Feebly she laugheth in the languid moon,*  
While Porphyro upon her face doth look,  
Like puzzled urchin on an aged crone,  
*Who keepeth closed a wondrous riddle-book,*  
*As spectated she sits in chimney nook;*  
But soon his eyes grew brilliant, when she told  
His lady's purpose; and he scarce could brook  
Tears, at the thought of those enchantments cold,  
And Madeline asleep in lap of legends old.

He almost shed tears—of sympathy, to think how his treasure is exposed to the cold—and of delight and pride to think of her sleeping beauty, and her love for himself. This passage "asleep in lap of legends old" is in the highest imaginative taste, fusing together the tangible and the spiritual, the real and the fanciful, the remote and the near. Madeline is asleep in her bed; but she is also asleep in accordance with the legends of the season; and therefore the bed becomes *their* lap as well as sleep's. The poet does not critically think of all this; he feels it: and thus should other young poets draw upon the prominent points of their feelings on a subject, sucking the essence out of them into analogous words, instead of beating about the bush for thoughts, and, perhaps, getting very clever ones, but confused—not the best, nor any one better than another. Such, at least, is the difference between the truest poetry and the degrees beneath it.

## XVI.

Sudden a thought came, like a full-blown rose,  
Flushing his brow; and in his pained heart  
Made purple rict; then doth he propose  
A stratagem, that makes the beldame start.  
"A cruel man, and impious, thou art:  
Sweet lady! let her pray, and sleep, and dream,  
Alone with her good angels, far apart  
From wicked men like thee. Go! go!—I deem  
Thou canst not, surely, be the same that thou dost seem."

## XVII.

"I will not harm her, by all saints I swear,"  
Quoth Porphyro: "Oh, may I ne'er find grace,  
When my weak voice shall whisper its last prayer,  
If one of her soft ringlets I displace,  
Or look with ruffian-passion in her face:  
Good! Angela, believe me, by these tears,  
Or I will, even in a moment's space,  
Awake with horrid shout my foemen's ears,  
And beard them, though they be more fang'd than wolves and bears."

## XVIII.

"Ah! why wilt thou affright a feeble soul?  
A poor, weak, palsy-stricken, church-yard thing,  
Whose passing-bell may ere the midnight toll;  
Whose prayers for thee, each morn and evening,  
Were never miss'd?" Thus, plaining, doth she bring

A gentler speech from burning Porphyro;  
So woeful and of such deep sorrowing,  
That Angela gives promise she will do  
Whatever he shall wish, betide her weal or woe;

## XIX.

Which was, to lead him in close secrecy,  
Even to Madeline's chamber, and there hide  
Him in a closet, of such privacy  
That he might see her beauty unespied,  
And win perhaps that night a peerless bride;  
While legion'd fairies paced the coverlet,  
And pale enchantment held her sleepy-eyed.  
Never on such a night have lovers met,  
Since Merlin paid his Demon all the monstrous debt.

What he means by Merlin's "monstrous debt," we cannot say. Merlin, the famous enchanter, obtained King Uther his interview with the fair Igerne; but though the son of a devil, and conversant with the race, we are aware of no debt that he owed them.

## XX.

"It shall be as thou wishest," said the dame;  
"All cates and dainties shall be stored there,  
Quickly on this feast-night: by the tambour frame,  
Her own lute thou wilt see: no time to spare,  
For I am slow and feeble, and scarce dare  
On such a catering trust my dizzy head:  
Wait here, my child, with patience; kneel in prayer  
The while: ah! thou must needs the lady wed,  
Or may I never leave my grave among the dead."

## XXI.

So saying, she hobbled off with busy fear;  
The lover's endless minutes slowly pass'd,  
The dame return'd, and whispered in his ear  
To follow her; with aged eyes aghast  
From fright of dim espial. Safe at last,  
Through many a dusky gallery, they gain  
The maiden's chamber, *silken, hush'd, and chaste,*  
Where Porphyro took covert, pleased amain:  
His poor guide hurried back with agues in her brain.

## XXII.

Her faltering hand upon the balustrade,  
Old Angela was feeling for the stair,  
When Madeline, St Agnes' charmed maid,  
Rose, like a mission'd spirit, unaware:  
With silver taper's light, and pious care,  
She turn'd, and down the aged gossip led  
To a safe level matting. Now prepare  
Young Porphyro, for gazing on that bed;  
She comes, she comes again, like ring-dove fray'd  
and fled.

## XXIII.

Out went the taper as she hurried in;  
*Its little smoke, in pallid moonshine, died:*  
She closed the door, she panted, all akin,  
To spirits of the air, and visions wide;  
Nor uttered syllable, or, woe betide!  
*But to her heart, her heart was voluble,*  
*Paining with eloquence her balmy side:*  
*As though a tongueless nightingale should swell*  
*Her throat in vain, and die, heart-stifled, in her dell.*

"Its little smoke, in pallid moonshine, died," is a verse in the taste of Chaucer, full of minute grace and truth. The smoke of the waxen taper seems almost as ethereal and fair as the moonlight, and both suit each other and the heroine. But what a lovely line is the seventh, about the heart,

"Paining with eloquence her balmy side!"

And the nightingale! how touching the simile! the heart a "tongueless nightingale," dying in that dell of the bosom. What thorough sweetness, and perfection of lovely imagery! How one delicacy is heaped upon another! But for a burst of richness, noiseless, coloured, suddenly enriching the moonlight, as if a door of heaven were opened, read the following:—



XXIV.

A casement, high and triple-arch'd, there was,  
All garlanded with carved imageries  
Of fruits and flowers, and bunches of knot-grass,  
And diamonded with panes of quaint device,  
Innumerable of stains and splendid dyes,  
As are the tiger-moth's deep-damask'd wings;  
And in the midst, 'mong thousand heraldries,  
And twilight saints, and dim emblazonings,  
A shielded 'scutcheon blush'd with blood of queens  
and kings.

Could all the pomp and graces of aristocracy,  
with Titian's and Raphael's aid to boot, go beyond  
the rich religion of this picture, with its "twilight  
saints," and its 'scutcheons "blushing with the blood  
of queens?" But we must not stop the reader:—

XXV.

Full on this casement shone the wintry moon,  
And threw warm gules on Madeline's fair breast,  
As down she knelt for heaven's grace and boon;  
Rose-bloom fell on her hands together prest,  
And on her silver cross soft amethyst;  
And on her hair a glory like a saint:  
She seemed a splendid angel, newly drest,  
Save wings, for heaven:—Porphyro grew faint,  
She knelt, so pure a thing, so free from mortal  
taint.

The lovely and innocent creature, thus praying  
under the gorgeous painted window, completes the  
exceeding and unique beauty of this picture,—one  
that will for ever stand by itself in poetry, as an  
addition to the stock. It would have struck a glow  
on the face of Shakspeare himself. He might have  
put Imogen or Ophelia under such a shrine. How  
proper, as well as pretty, the heraldic term *gules*,  
considering the occasion. *Red* would not have  
been a fiftieth part so good. And with what  
elegant luxury he touches the "silver cross" with  
"amethyst," and the fair human hands with "rose-  
colours," the kin to their carnation! The lover's  
growing "faint" is one of the few inequalities which  
are to be found in the later productions of this great,  
but young and over-sensitive poet. He had, at the  
time of writing his poems, the seeds of a mortal  
illness in him, and he, doubtless, wrote as he had  
felt—for he was also deeply in love; and extreme  
sensibility struggled in him with a great under-  
standing. But our picture is not finished:—

XXVI.

Anon his heart revives: her vespers done,  
Of all its wreathed pearls her hair she frees;  
Unclasps her warmed jewels one by one;  
Loosens her fragrant bodice; by degrees  
Her rich attire creeps rustling to her knees:  
Half-hidden, like a mermaid in sea-weed,  
Pensive awhile she dreams awake, and sees  
In fancy fair St Agnes in her bed,  
But dares not look behind, or all the charm is fled.

How true and cordial, the "warmed jewels," and  
what matter of fact also, made elegant, in the rustling  
downward of the attire; and the mixture of dress and  
undress, and dishevelled hair, likened to a "mermaid  
in sea-weed!" But the next stanza is perhaps the  
most exquisite in the poem.

XXVII.

Soon, trembling in her soft and chilly nest,  
In sort of wakeful swoon, perplex'd she lay,  
Until the popp'd warmth of sleep oppress'd  
Her soothed limbs, and soul, fatigued away,  
Flown, like a thought, until the morrow-day;  
Blissfully haven'd both from joy and pain;  
Clasped like a missal, where swart Prynims pray;  
Blinded alike from sunshine and from rain,  
As though a rose should shut, and be a bud  
again.

Can the beautiful go beyond this? We never saw  
it. And how the imagery rises! Flown like a  
thought—Blissfully haven'd—Clasped like a missal in  
a land of *Prynims*: that is to say, where Christian  
prayer books must not be seen, and are, therefore,  
doubly cherished for the danger. And then, although

no thing can surpass the preciousness of this idea, is  
the idea of the beautiful, crowning all—

"Blinded alike from sunshine and from rain,  
As though a rose should shut, and be a bud again."

Thus it is that poetry, in its intense sympathy with  
creation, may be said to create anew, rendering its  
words almost as tangible as the objects they speak of,  
and individually more lasting; the spiritual per-  
petuity putting them on a level (not to speak it pro-  
fanely) with the fugitive substance.

But we are to have more luxuries still, presently.

XXVIII.

Stol'n to this paradise, and so entranced,  
Porphyro gazed upon her empty dress,  
And listen'd to her breathing, if it chanced  
To wake into a slumberous tenderness;  
Which when he heard, that minute did he bless,  
And breathed, himself; then from the closet crept,  
Noiseless as fear in a wild wilderness,  
And over the hush'd carpet silent stept,  
And 'tween the curtains peep'd, where, lo! how  
fast she slept.

XXIX.

Then, by the bedside, where the faded moon  
Made a dim silver twilight,—soft he set  
A table, and, half-anguish'd, threw thereon  
A cloth of woven crimson, gold, and jet:—  
O for some drowsy Morphean amulet!  
The boisterous, midnight, festive clarion,  
The kettle drum, and far-heard clarionet,  
Affray his ears, though but in dying tone:—  
The hall door shuts again, and all the noise is  
gone,

XXX.

And still she slept an azure-lidded sleep  
In blanched linen, smooth and lavender'd,  
While he from forth the closet brought a heap  
Of candied apple, quince, and plum, and gourd,  
With jellies soother than the creamy curd,  
And lucent syrups, tinct with cinnamon;  
Manna and dates, in argosy transferr'd  
From Fez; and spiced dainties, every one  
From silken Samarcand to cedar'd Lebanon.

Here is delicate modulation, and super-refined  
epicurean nicety!

"Lucent syrups, tinct with cinnamon,"

make us read the line delicately, and at the tip-end,  
as it were, of one's tongue.

XXXI.

These delicacies he heap'd with glowing hand;  
On golden dishes and in baskets bright  
Of wreathed silver: sumptuous they stand,  
In the retired quiet of the night,  
Filling the chilly room with perfume light.—  
"And now, my love, my seraph fair, awake!  
Thou art my heaven, and I thine eremite:  
Open thine eyes, for meek St Agnes' sake,  
Or I shall drowse beside thee, so my soul doth  
ache."

XXXII.

Thus whispering, his warm, unnerv'd arm  
Sank in her pillow. Shaded was her dream—  
By the dusk curtains:—'twas a midnight charm  
Impossible to melt as iced stream:  
The lustrous salvers in the moonlight gleam;  
Broad golden fringe upon the carpet lies;  
It seem'd he never, never could redeem  
From such a steadfast spell his lady's eyes;  
So mused awhile, entol'd in woofed phantasies.

XXXIII.

Awakening up, he took her hollow lute,—  
Tumultuous,—and, in chords that tenderest be,  
He played an ancient ditty, long since mute,  
In Provence call'd, "La belle dame sans mercy:"  
Close to her ear touching the melody:—  
Wherewith disturb'd, she uttered a soft moan:  
He ceased—she panted quick—and suddenly  
Her blue affray'd eyes wide open shone:  
Upon his knees he sank, pale as smooth-sculptured  
stone.

XXXIV.

Her eyes were open, but she still beheld,  
Now wide awake, the vision of her sleep:  
There was a painful change, that night expell'd  
The blisses of her dream so pure and deep,  
At which fair Madeline began to weep,  
And moan forth witless words with many a sigh;  
While still her gaze on Porphyro would keep;  
Who knelt, with joined hands and piteous eye,  
Fearing to move or speak, she look'd so dream-  
ingly.

XXXV.

"Ah, Porphyro!" said she, "but even now  
Thy voice was a sweet tremble in mine ear,  
Made tuneable with every sweetest vow,  
And those sad eyes were spiritual and clear;  
How changed thou art! how pallid, chill, and  
drear,—  
Give me that voice again, my Porphyro,  
Those looks immortal, those complainings dear;  
Oh! leave me not in this eternal woe,  
For if thou diest, my love, I know not where to  
go."

Madeline is half awake, and Porphyro reassures  
her with living, kind looks, and an affectionate em-  
brace.

XXXVI.

Beyond a mortal man impassioned far  
At these voluptuous accents, he arose,  
Ethereal, flushed, and like a throbbing star  
Seen 'mid the sapphire heaven's deep repose;  
Into her dream he melted, as the rose  
Blendeth its odour with the violet,—  
Solution sweet. Meanwhile the frost wind blows  
Like love's alarm, pattering the sharp sleet  
Against the window panes: St Agnes' moon hath  
set.

XXXVII.

'Tis dark; quick pattereth the flaw-blown sleet:  
"This is no dream; my bride, my Madeline!"  
'Tis dark: the iced gusts still rave and beat:  
"No dream, alas! alas! and woe is mine;  
Porphyro will leave me here to fade and pine,—  
Cruel! what traitor could thee hither bring?  
I curse not, for my heart is lost in thine,  
Though thou forsakest a deceived thing:—  
A dove, forlorn and lost, with sick unpruned  
wing."

XXXVIII.

"My Madeline! sweet dreamer! lovely bride!  
Say, may I be for aye thy vassal blest?  
Thy beauty's shield, heart-shaped, and vermeil-  
dyed?  
Ah! silver shrine, here will I take my rest,  
After so many hours of toil and quest—  
A famished pilgrim, saved by miracle,  
Though I have found, I will not rob thy nest  
Saving of thy sweet self; if thou think'st well  
To trust, fair Madeline, to no rude infidel."

With what a pretty wilful conceit the *costume* of  
the poem is kept up in the third line about the  
shield! The poet knew when to introduce apparent  
trifles forbidden to those who are void of real passion,  
and who, feeling nothing intensely, can intensify  
nothing.

XXXIX.

"Hark! 'tis an elfin-storm from faery land,  
Of haggard seeming, but a boon indeed;  
Arise—arise! the morning is at hand:—  
The bloated wassailers will never heed:—  
Let us away, my love, with happy speed;  
There are no ears to hear, or eyes to see,—  
Drown'd all in Rhenish and the sleepy mead:  
Awake! arise! my love, and fearless be,  
For o'er the southern moors I have a home for  
thee."

XL.

She hurried at his words, beset with fears,  
For there were sleeping dragons all around,  
At glaring watch, perhaps, with ready spears—  
Down the wide stairs a darkling way they found,—  
In all the house was heard no human sound.

A chain-droop'd lamp was flickering by each door;  
The arras, rich with horseman, hawk, and hound,  
Flutter'd in the besieging wind's uproar;  
And the lony carpets rose along the gusty floor.

This is a slip of the memory, for there were hardly carpets in those days. But the truth of the painting makes amends, as in the unchronological pictures of old masters.

## XII.

They glide, like phantoms, into the wide hall;  
Like phantoms to the iron porch they glide,  
Where lay the porter, in uneasy sprawl,  
With a huge empty flagon by his side;  
The wakeful bloodhound rose, and shook his hide,  
But his sagacious eye an inmate owns:  
By one, and one, the bolts full easy slide:  
The chains lie silent on the footworn stones;  
The key turns, and the door upon its hinges groans.

## XIII.

And they are gone: ay, ages long ago  
These lovers fled away into the storm.  
That night the Baron dreamt of many a woe,  
And all his warrior-guests, with shade and form  
Of witch, and demon, and large coffin-worm,  
Were long be-nightmared. Angela the old  
Died palsy-twitch'd, with meagre face deform;  
The beadsman, after thousand aves told,  
For aye unsought-for slept among his ashes cold.

Here endeth the young and divine Poet, but not the delight and gratitude of his readers; for, as he sings elsewhere—

"A thing of beauty is a joy for ever."

## ROMANCE OF REAL LIFE.

## LIV.—LIVING UNDER GROUND.

FROM 'Memoirs of George and Lady Grissel Baillie, by Lady Murray,'—the tribute of a loving daughter to the memory of loving parents,—a book most honourable to all parties. *Grissel is Griselda*, the heroine's name in the beautiful story of Chaucer and Boccaccio, whose patience has become a proverb. It is often found among the British gentry of old times, and therefore must have been frequently inherited and introduced among families who had little pretensions to the virtue; but, in the present instance, it seems to have illustrated a family quality.

Lady Grissel Baillie (says her daughter) was born at Redbraes Castle, December 25, 1665; was married there, September 17, 1692; and died at London, December 6, 1746. She was buried close by my father's side, in the monument at Mellerstain, on her birthday, Christmas, 25th of December, in the same manner she had directed my father's funeral, according to his own orders; near relations, near neighbours, and her own tenants only being present—a day never to be forgot by her family, as it brought her into the world, who was so great a blessing to it, and also hid and buried her from us.

She was the eldest of eighteen children my grandmother bore, except two, who died infants. My lady Torphichen, the youngest, is now the only one alive, and sixteen years younger than my mother. She was called after her mother, and, from her infancy, was the darling and comfort of her parents, having early occasion to be trusted and tried by them. In the troubles of King Charles the Second's time, she began her life with many afflicting, terrifying hardships; though, I have often heard her say, she never thought them any. At the age of twelve, she was sent by her father to their country-house at Edinburgh (a long journey), when my grandfather Baillie was first imprisoned (my grandfathers being early and intimate friends, connected by the same way of thinking in religion and politics), to try if, by her age, she could get admittance into the prison unsuspected, and slip a letter into his hand of advice and information, and bring back what intelligence she could. She succeeded so well in both, that from that time I reckon her hardships began,

from the confidence put in her, and the activity she naturally had, far beyond her age, in executing whatever she was intrusted with.

Soon after that, her father was confined fifteen months in Dumbarton Castle, and was then set at liberty, without ever being told for what he was pent up all that time; and till he went to Holland, she was the active person that did all, by my grandmother's directions, whom affliction, and care of her little ones, kept at home, being less able to make journeys, and would have been more narrowly watched, and sooner suspected than one of my mother's age.

After persecution began afresh, and my grandfather Baillie again in prison, her father thought it necessary to keep concealed, and soon found he had too good reason for so doing; parties being continually sent out in search of him, and often to his own house, to the terror of all in it; though not from any fear for his safety whom they imagined at a great distance from home; for no soul knew where he was but my grandmother and my mother, except one man, a carpenter, called Jamie Winter, who used to work in the house, and lived a mile off, on whose fidelity they thought they could depend, and were not deceived. The frequent examinations and oaths put to servants in order to make discoveries, were so strict, they durst not run the risk of trusting any of them. By the assistance of this man, they got a bed and bed-clothes carried in the night to the burying-place, a vault under ground at Polwarth church, a mile from the house; where he was concealed a month, and had only for light an open slit at one end, through which nobody could see what was below. She went every night, by herself, at midnight, to carry him victuals and drink, and stayed with him as long as she could, to get home before day. In all this time, my grandfather showed the same constant composure and cheerfulness of mind that he continued to possess, till his death, which was at the age of eighty-four; all which good qualities she inherited from him in a high degree. Often did they laugh heartily, in that doleful habitation, at different accidents that happened. She, at that time, had a terror for a church-yard, especially in the dark, as is not uncommon at her age, by idle nursery stories; but when engaged by concern for her father, she stumbled over the graves every night alone, without fear of any kind entering her thoughts, but for soldiers and parties in search of him, which the least noise or motion of a leaf put her in terror for. The minister's house was near the church; the first night she went, his dogs kept up such a barking, as put her in fear of a discovery; my grandmother sent for the minister next day, and, upon pretence of a mad dog, got him to hang all his dogs. There was also difficulty of getting victuals to carry him, without the servants suspecting; the only way it was to be done was, by stealing it off her plate, at dinner, into her lap. Many a diverting story she has told about this, and other things of a like nature. Her father liked sheep's head; and while the children were eating their broth, she had concealed most of one in her lap; when her brother Sandy (the late Lord Marchmont) had done, he looked up with astonishment, and said, "Mother, will ye look at Grissel, while we have been eating our broth she has eat up the whole sheep's head!" This occasioned so much mirth among them, that her father at night was greatly entertained by it, and desired Sandy might have a share of the next. I need not multiply stories of this kind, of which I know many. His great comfort and constant entertainment (for he had no light to read by), was repeating Buchanan Psalms, which he had by heart, from beginning to end, and retained them to his dying day. Two years before he died, which was in the year 1724, I was witness to his desiring my mother to take up that book, which, amongst others, always lay upon his table, and bid her try if he had forgot his Psalms, by naming any one she would have him repeat; and by casting her eye over it she would know if he were right, though she did not understand it; and he missed not a word in any place she named to him, and said they had been the

great comfort of his life, by night and day, on all occasions.

He retained his judgment and good-humour to the last. Two or three years before he died, my mother was at Berwick with him, where he then lived; and many of her relations came there to see her before she went to London. As mirth and good-humour, and particularly dancing, had been always one characteristic of the family, when so many of us were met, being no fewer than fourteen of his grandchildren and children, we had a dance. He was then very weak in his limbs, and could not walk down stairs, but desired to be carried down to the room where we were, to see us; which he did with great cheerfulness, saying, "Though he could not dance with us, he could yet beat time with his foot;" which he did, and bid us dance as long as we could; that it was the best medicine he knew, for, at the same time that it gave exercise to the body, it cheered the mind. At his usual time of going to bed, he was carried up stairs, and we ceased dancing for fear of disturbing him; but he soon sent to bid us go on, for the noise and music, so far from disturbing that it would lull him to sleep. He had no notion of interrupting the innocent pleasures of others, though his age hindered him to partake of them. His exemplary piety and goodness were no bar to his mirth.

She often said, her natural temper was warm and passionate; but, from the time I could observe her, there appeared nothing but meekness, calmness, and resignation; and she often reproved us for the contrary. Our saying "we could not help it," was no satisfying answer to her, who told us, she had been the same, and had conquered it.

Her duty and affection as a wife was unparalleled. I have it by me, writ in a book with her own hand, amongst many other things: "The best of husbands, and delight of my life for forty-eight years, without one jar betwixt us, died at Oxford (where he went for the education of his grandsons), the 6th of August, 1738, and was sent home to his burying place at Mellerstain."

I have often heard her declare that they never had the shadow of a quarrel or misunderstanding, no, not for a moment, and that to the last of his life, she felt the same ardent and tender love and affection for him, and the same desire to please him in the smallest trifle, that she had at their first acquaintance. Indeed, her principal and sole delight was, to watch and attend to everything that could give him pleasure or make him easy. He never went abroad but she went to the window to look after him; and so she did that very day he fell ill, the last time he was abroad, never taking her eyes from him as long as he was in sight.

## TWELFTH NIGHT, LOVE, AND THE TREES.

To the Editor of the London Journal.

Enfield, January 12, 1835.

DEAR INDICATOR,—Well do I know the hallowed residence in York buildings, so charmingly alluded to in the close of your article on Twelfth Night. Often have I heard recounted the never-to-be-forgotten festivities of "the Twelfth Night," for I can boast of being nearly related to one of the fortunate members of the party assembled on that renowned occasion. That house once formed the boundary of my "run on a frosty morning," when as a rosy child, I used to roll my hoop daily down Baker street.

Perhaps the claims I have already advanced as intitling me to address you, will form my apology; but I have yet one more plea in behalf of this trespass on your attention. Your heart-deep sympathy with human nature and its best emotions, encourages me to impart to you (and if you think fit, to your readers) the following simple incident.

Do you know a cluster of fields, dear Indicator, in the neighbourhood of one of our lovely villages (where are there such villages as in beautiful



England?) lying about ten miles to the north of London?

It was a sultry day in July 18—, the sky was one unvaried blue—the hedge-rows (maugre the heat) were bright green—and no noise seemed stirring but the contented hum of myriads of insects. This hush of Nature was not broken by a couple who advanced arm in arm, in mute enjoyment of happy thoughts—they had been married that morning, and were retiring from “populous cities” to this quiet village, the birth-place of the bridegroom. At last the lady stopped, as if to “still her beating mind” by repose.

“When Portia’s exulting heart,” whispered she, “was beating high with the joyous sense of her own recent good deeds, she moralized every object into a magnified source of delight—the ‘little candle’ from her own hall shows like a welcoming star. I know not how it is, but methinks I never saw colour surpassing in vividness the tender green of yonder young oaks.”

“Singular enough,” replied her companion, “that those very trees should have attracted your peculiar notice. Would that the venerable planter of those oaks could witness this moment!—the hope that his spirit does behold and rejoice in his son’s present felicity forms one of the many blessed visions of this day. Several years ago, when I was a little fellow no higher than one of these saplings, it was one of my beloved father’s favourite amusements, during his daily walks in this vicinity, to thrust his walking-stick into the ground, and to drop into the hole thus formed, an acorn, supplied from a canvass bag, which it was the pride of his little companion to be permitted to hold while he stood by and watched the interesting operation. I may say that we have planted some thousands in various walks.”

The touching association, thus added to the lovers’ stock of pleasant feelings, will serve as an illustration of your remarks in the article above alluded to: “Every one should plant a tree who can. \* \* \* If a man cannot reckon upon enjoying the shade much himself, it is surely worth while to bequeath so pleasant a memorial of himself to others.”

Accept the compliments of the joyous season you have so delightfully treated of lately, and believe me, dear Indicator (for under that title, so long dear to me, allow me still to address you),

Your constant reader and admirer,

FELICIA MARITATA.

\* \* We hope the reader does not think us lost to all sense of shame in publishing so flattering a letter as this. All we can say is, that we could not help it; and that he must throw the first stony editorship at us, who could. Besides, it was one of the avowed objects of this Journal to open people’s hearts, and make the community more sensible of one another’s enjoyments. The sweet candour of the signature alone would make the letter worth publishing, setting aside its other merits.

## WEEK.

BIRTH-DAYS AND OTHER ANNIVERSARIES.

JANUARY 21. *Eve of St Agnes.*—See the First Article.

—22, 1561. At York House (on the site of the present Buckingham street in the Strand), Francis Bacon, Viscount St Alban’s, &c. The Father of Experimental Philosophy,—the liberator of the hands of knowledge. A great and wise man who would have been still wiser, and incurred no fall, and no shame of ingratitude to a fallen man (Essex), had he possessed heart enough to follow out the doctrines of his Essays, and set the simplicity of a sage above worldly cunning. Yet even in those Essays, admirable as they are, may be discerned the seeds of that mistake, even in the very passage where he seems to denounce it. (See the Essay upon ‘Cunning.’) Lord Bacon died like a proper experimenter, in consequence of his getting out of his carriage to make some observation respecting snow. It was upon Highgate Hill. A cold and fever seized him; he stopped at the house of Lord Southampton, and expired there after a few days’ illness, on the spot which has since witnessed the death of a philosopher

of a very different description,—one of the most imaginative, and least advantage-seeking,—Mr Coleridge. The house in which Mr Coleridge died, in the “Grove,” was one of a set that was built upon the ground formerly occupied by Southampton House.

—1592. At Chantersier, near Digne, in Provence, Pierre Gassendi, an eminent mathematician and philosopher, reviver of the doctrines of Epicurus, which, however, he reconciled with belief in a divine superintending mind. The morals of Epicurus also he construed after their true fashion, and not in the spirit of the vulgar mistake which has since rendered the word Epicurus synonymous with a studier of the palate. Gassendi was a walker in gardens, and fond of the society of his friends. In his last illness he was bled beyond his strength, and, while sinking away into death, said to his amanuensis, “It is better, by this loss of strength, to sleep quietly in Christ, than to be taken off with more pain by suffocation.”

—1788. In Holles Street, Cavendish Square, George Gordon Byron, Lord Byron, a true poet and wit, whose poetry would have been more equal, and whose productions, altogether, of a turn less startling to those who wish to think well and hopefully of all things, had he not had the misfortune to be born in a rank that perplexed his aspirations, and of parents unfitted to develope his character.

24, 1712. Frederick the Second of Prussia, a great soldier and statesman, and mediocre man of letters, who singularly exalted the power and importance of his country in the midst of potent antagonists.

—1792. At Paris, son of a watchmaker, Pierre Augustin Caron de Beaumarchais, author of the celebrated comedy of ‘Figaro,’ an abridgment of which has been rendered more celebrated by the music of Mozart. He made a large fortune by supplying the American republicans with arms and ammunition, and lost it by speculations in salt and printing. His comedy is one of those productions which are accounted dangerous, from developing the spirit of intrigue and gallantry with more gaiety than objection; and they would be more undeniably so, if the good-humour and self-examination to which they excite did not suggest a spirit of charity and inquiry beyond themselves.

—1749. Charles James Fox, son of the first Lord Holland, an illustrious statesman, whose character is too nearly concerned with these times to be handled in this unpolitical Journal. He was an amiable man, of a wise simplicity of manner, and a cultivator of elegant literature. We saw him, not long before his death, standing in Parliament street, and making two young gentlemen laugh heartily, apparently with some story that he was relating to them.

25, 1627. At Lismore, in Ireland, of a noble family, Robert Boyle, a celebrated chemical philosopher, not so happy in his ethics and moral reasoning. Swift bantered the triviality of his thinking in his famous ‘Meditations on a Broomstick.’ His want of a right Christian discernment in his Christianity may be illustrated (with the reader’s leave) by the following passage from the ‘Indicator’ :—

“The celebrated Robert Boyle, the chymist, was accounted, in his days, a sort of perfection of a man, especially in all respects intellectual, moral, and religious. This excellent person was in the habit of moralizing upon everything that he did or suffered, such as ‘Upon his manner of giving meat to his dog,’—‘Upon his horse stumbling in a very fair way,’—‘Upon his sitting at ease in a coach that went very fast,’ and among other Reflections is one ‘Upon a fish’s struggling after having swallowed the hook.’ It amounts to this; that, at the moment when the fish thinks himself about to be most happy, the hook ‘does so wound and tear his tender gills, and thereby puts him into such restless pain, that no doubt he wishes the hook, bait, and all, were out of his torn jaws again. Thus,’ says he, ‘men who do what they should not, to obtain any sensual desires,’ &c. &c. Not a thought comes over him as to his own part in the business, and what he ought to say of himself for tearing the jaws and gills to indulge his own appetite for excitement. Take also the following :—‘Fifth

Section—Reflection 1. Killing a crow (out of window) in a hog’s trough, and immediately tracing the ensuing reflexion with a pen made of one of his quills. —Long and patiently did I wait for this unlucky crow, wallowing in the sluttish trough (whose sides kept him a great while out of the reach of my gun), and gorging himself with no less greediness than the very swinish proprietaries of the feast, till at length my no less unexpected than fatal shot struck him down, and, turning the scene of his delight into that of his pangs, made him abruptly alter his note, and change his triumphant chant into a dismal and tragic noise. This method is not unusual to divine justice, towards brawny and incorrigible sinners, &c. &c. Thus the crow for eating his dinner, is a rascal worthy to be shot by the Honourable Mr Robert Boyle, before the latter sits down to his own; while the said Mr Boyle, instead of contenting himself with being a gentleman in search of amusement at the expence of birds and fish, is a representative of Divine Justice.”

We laugh at this wretched moral pedantry now, and deplore the involuntary hard-heartedness, which such mistakes in religion tended to produce; but in how many respects should it not make us look about ourselves, and see where we fall short of an enlargement of thinking?

—1759. On the banks of the Doon, in Ayrshire, Robert Burns, the poet of the song of Nature. He is so well known, and so particularly talked of at present, in consequence of Mr Cunningham’s edition of his Life and Works, that it is unnecessary to say anything further of him in this place.

27, 1756. At Salzburg, in Germany, Johann Chrysostom Wolfgang Theophilus Mozart, the prince of dramatic musicians; wonderful for the endless variety and undeviating grace of his invention. Yet his wife said of him, that he was a still better dancer than musician! In a soul so full of harmony, kindness towards others was to be looked for; and it was found. When a child, he would go about asking everybody “whether they loved him.” When a great musician, a man in distress accosted him one day in the street, and, as he had no money to give him, he bade him wait a little, while he went into a coffee-house, where he composed a beautiful minuet on the instant, and, sending the poor man with it to a music-seller’s, obtained for him several gold pieces. This is the way that great musicians rise. Their sensibility is their genius.

## CHARACTERS OF SHAKSPEARE’S PLAYS.

BY WILLIAM HAZLITT.

NO. III.—MACBETH.

“The poet’s eye in a fine frenzy rolling  
Doth glance from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven;  
And, as imagination bodies forth  
The forms of things unknown, the poet’s pen  
Turns them to shape, and gives to airy nothing  
A local habitation and a name.”

MACBETH and Lear, Othello and Hamlet, are usually reckoned Shakspeare’s four principal tragedies. Lear stands first for the profound intensity of the passion; Macbeth for the wildness of the imagination and the rapidity of the action; Othello for the progressive interest and powerful alternation of feeling; Hamlet for the refined development of thought and sentiment. If the force of genius shown in each of these works is astonishing, their variety is not less so. They are like different creations of the same mind, not one of which has the slightest reference to the rest. This distinctness and originality is indeed the necessary consequence of truth and nature. Shakspeare’s genius alone appeared to possess the resources of nature. He is “your only tragedy-maker.” His plays have the force of things upon the mind. What he represents is brought home to the bosom, a part of our experience, implanted in the memory, as if we had known the places, persons, and things of which he treats. Macbeth is like a record of a preternatural and tragical event. It has the rugged severity of an old chronicle with all that the imagination of the part

can engraft upon traditional belief. The castle of Macbeth, round which "the air smells wooingly," and where "the temple-haunting marlet builds," has a real subsistence in the mind; the weird sisters meet as in person on the "blasted heath;" the "air-drawn dagger" moves slowly before our eyes: the "gracious Duncan," the "blood-boltered Banquo," stand before us; all that passes through the mind of Macbeth, without the loss of a tittle, passes through ours. All that could actually take place, and all that is only possible to be conceived, what was said and what what done, the workings of passion, the spells of magic, are brought before us with the same absolute truth and vividness. Shakspeare excelled in the openings of his plays; that of Macbeth is the most striking of any. The wildness of the scenery, the sudden shifting of the situations and characters, the bustle, the expectations excited, are equally extraordinary. From the first entrance of the witches and the description of them when they meet Macbeth—

—"What are these

So wither'd and so wild in their attire,  
That look not like the inhabitants of th' earth,  
And yet are on't?"—

the mind is prepared for all that follows.

This tragedy is alike distinguished for the lofty imagination it displays, and for the tumultuous vehemence of the action; and the one is made the moving principle of the other. The overwhelming pressure of preternatural agency urges on the tide of human passion with redoubled force. Macbeth himself appears driven on by the violence of his fate, like a vessel before a storm; he reels to and fro like a drunken man; he staggers under the weight of his own purposes and the suggestions of others; he stands at bay with his situation; and from the superstitious awe and breathless suspense into which the communications of the Weird Sisters throw him, is hurried on with daring impatience to verify their predictions, and with impious and bloody hand to tear aside the veil which hides the uncertainty of the future. He is not equal to the struggle with fate and conscience. He now "bends up each corporal instrument to the terrible feat;" at other times his heart misgives him, and he is cowed and abashed by his success. "The deed, no less than the attempt, confounds him." His mind is assailed by the stings of remorse, and full of "preternatural solicitings." His speeches and soliloquies are dark riddles on human life, baffling solution, and entangling him in their labyrinths. In thought he is absent and perplexed, sudden and desperate in act, from a distrust of his own resolution. His blindly rushing forward on the objects of his ambition and revenge, or his recoiling from them, equally betrays the harassed state of his feelings. This part of his character is admirably set off, by being brought in connection with that of Lady Macbeth, whose obdurate strength of will and masculine firmness give her the ascendancy over her husband's faltering virtue. She at once seizes on the opportunity that offers for the accomplishment of all their wished-for greatness, and never flinches from her object till all is over. The magnitude of her resolution almost covers the magnitude of her guilt. She a great bad woman, whom we hate, but whom we fear more than we hate. She does not excite our loathing and abhorrence like Regan and Gonerill. She is only wicked to gain a great end, and is perhaps more distinguished by her commanding presence of mind and inexorable self-will, which do not suffer her to be diverted from a bad purpose, when once formed, by weak and womanly regrets, than by the hardness of her heart or want of natural affections. The impression which her lofty determination of character makes on the mind of Macbeth is well described where he exclaims,

"Bring forth men children only;  
For thy undaunted mettle should compose  
Nothing but males!"

Nor do the pains she is at to "screw his courage to the sticking-place," the reproach to him, not to be "lost so poorly in himself," the assurance that "a

little water clears them of this deed," show anything but her greater consistency in depravity. Her strong-nerved ambition furnishes ribs of steel to "the sides of his intent;" and she is herself wound up to the execution of her baneful project with the same unshrinking fortitude in crime, that in other circumstances she would probably have shown patience in suffering. The deliberate sacrifice of all other considerations to the gaining "for their future days and nights sole sovereign sway and masterdom," by the murder of Duncan, is gorgeously expressed in her invocation on hearing of "his fatal entrance under her battlements:"—

"Come all you spirits

That tend on mortal thoughts, unsex me here:  
And fill me, from the crown to th' toe, top-full  
Of direst cruelty; make thick my blood,  
Stop up the access and passage to remorse,  
That no compunctious visitings of nature  
Shake my fell purpose, nor keep peace between  
The effect and it. Come to my woman's breasts,  
And take my milk for gall, you murdering  
ministers,

Wherever in your sightless substances  
You wait on nature's mischief. Come, thick  
night!

And pall thee in the dunnest smoke of hell,  
That my keen knife see not the wound it makes,  
Nor heav'n peep through the blanket of the dark,  
To cry, hold, hold!"

When she first hears that "Duncan comes there to sleep," she is so overcome by the news, which is beyond her utmost expectations, that she answers the messenger, "Thou'rt mad to say it!" and on receiving her husband's account of the predictions of the Witches, conscious of his instability of purpose, and that her presence is necessary to goad him on to the consummation of his promised greatness, she exclaims—

"Hie thee hither,

That I may pour my spirits in thine ear,  
And chastise with the valour of my tongue  
All that impedes thee from the golden round,  
Which fate and metaphysical aid doth seem  
To have thee crowned withal."

This swelling exultation and keen spirit of triumph, this uncontrollable eagerness of anticipation, which seems to dilate her form and take possession of all her faculties, this solid, substantial flesh and blood display of passion, exhibit a striking contrast to the cold, abstracted, gratuitous, servile malignity of the Witches, who are equally instrumental in urging Macbeth to his fate for the mere love of mischief, and from a disinterested delight in deformity and cruelty. They are hags of mischief, obscene panders to iniquity, malicious from their impotence of enjoyment, enamoured of destruction, because they are themselves unreal, abortive, half-existences, and who become sublime from their exemption from all human sympathies and contempt for all human affairs, as Lady Macbeth does by the force of passion! Her fault seems to have been an excess of that strong principle of self-interest and family aggrandisement, not amenable to the common feelings of compassion and justice, which is so marked a feature in barbarous nations and times. A passing reflection of this kind, on the resemblance of the sleeping king to her father, alone prevents her from slaying Duncan with her own hand.

To be concluded in our next.

— They say, of Jupiter, that he can of himself dart favourable and propitious bolts, but must have the counsel and assistance of the twelve gods when he would throw those of danger and vengeance. 'Tis a great account, that the greatest of the gods, who, of himself can benefit the whole world, can destroy none without solemn deliberation. The wisdom of Jupiter himself is so wary of mistake, that, when there is a debate of vengeance, he must call a council to stay his arm.—*Du Fair.*

## SPECIMENS OF THE WIT, HUMOUR, AND CRITICISM OF CHARLES LAMB.

(To be continued till his Works are gone through.)

BURIAL SOCIETIES.—I was amused the other day with having the following notice thrust into my hands by a man who gives out bills at the corner of Fleet market. Whether he saw any prognostics about me that made him judge such notice seasonable, I cannot say; I might, perhaps, carry in a countenance (naturally not very florid) traces of a fever which had not long left me. Those fellows have a good instinctive way of guessing at the sort of people that are likeliest to pay attention to their papers:—

"BURIAL SOCIETY.

"A favourable opportunity now offers to any person of either sex, who would wish to be buried in a genteel manner, by paying one shilling entrance, and twopence per week for the benefit of the stock. Members to be free in six months. The money to be paid at Mr Middleton's, at the sign of the *First and the Last*, Stonecutter's street, Fleet market. The deceased to be furnished as follows:—A strong elm coffin, covered with superfine black, and finished with two rows all round, close-drove, best japanned nails, and adorned with ornamental drops, a handsome plate of inscription, angel above, and flowers beneath, and four pair of handsome handles with wrought grips; the coffin to be well pitched, lined and ruffled with fine crape; a handsome crape shroud, cap and pillow. For use, a handsome velvet pall, three gentlemen's cloaks, three crape hat-bands, three hoods and scarfs, and six pair of gloves; two porters equipped to attend the funeral, as many to attend the same with bands and gloves; also, the burial fees paid, if not exceeding one guinea."

"Man," says Sir Thomas Brown, "is a noble animal, splendid in ashes and pompous in the grave." Whoever drew up this little advertisement certainly understood this appetite in the species, and has made abundant provision for it.

It really almost induces *tedium vite* upon one to read it. Methinks I could be willing to die, in death to be so attended. The two rows all round, close-drove, best black japanned nails; how feelingly do they invite and almost irresistibly persuade us to come and be fastened down! what aching head can resist the temptation to repose, which the crape shroud, the cap, and the pillow present! what sting is there in death, which the handles with wrought grips are not calculated to pluck away? what victory in the grave, which the drops and the velvet pall do not render at least extremely disputable? But, above all, the pretty emblematic plate, with angel above and the flowers beneath, takes me mightily.

UGLY SUBJECTS.—How ugly a person appears, upon whose reputation some awkward aspersion hangs, and how suddenly his countenance clears up with his character. I remember being persuaded of a man, whom I had conceived an ill opinion of, that he had a very bad set of teeth; which, since I have had better opportunities of being acquainted with his face and facts, I find to have been the very reverse of the truth. That crooked old woman, I once said, speaking of an ancient gentlewoman whose actions did not square altogether with my notions of the rule of right; the unanimous surprise of the company, before whom I uttered these words, soon convinced me that I confounded mental with bodily obliquity, and that there was nothing tortuous about the old lady but her deeds.

This humour of mankind to deny personal comeliness to those with whose moral attributes they are dissatisfied, is very strongly shown in those advertisements which stare us in the face, from the walls of every street, and, with the tempting bait which they hang forth, stimulate at once cupidity and an abstract love of justice in the breast of every passing peruser; I mean the advertisements offering rewards for the apprehension of absconded culprits, strayed apprentices, bankrupts who have conveyed away their effects, or debtors that have run away from their



bail. I observe that, in exact proportion to the indignity with which the prosecutor, who is commonly the framer of the advertisement, conceives he has been treated, the personal pretensions of the fugitive are denied, and his defects exaggerated.

A fellow whose misdeeds have been directed against the public in general, and in whose delinquency no individual shall feel himself particularly interested, generally meets with fair usage. A coiner or a smuggler shall get off tolerably well. His beauty, if he has any, is not much underrated; his deformities are not much magnified. A run-away apprentice who excites, perhaps, the next least degree of spleen in his prosecutor, generally escapes with a pair of bandy legs; if he has taken anything with him in his flight, a hitch in his gait is generally superadded.

AN APPETITE ILL-PROVIDED FOR.—You have seen, if you have ever passed your time much in country towns, the kind of suppers which elderly ladies in those places have lying in petto in an adjoining parlour, next to that where they are entertaining their periodically-invited coevals with cards and muffins. The cloth is usually spread some half-hour before the final rubber is decided, whence they adjourn to sup upon what may emphatically be called nothing. A sliver of ham, purposely contrived to be transparent to show the china-dish through it, neighbouring a slip of invisible brawn, which abuts upon something they call a tartlet, as that is bravely supported by an atom of marmalade, flanked in its turn by a grain of potted beef, with a power of such dishling-minims of hospitality, spread in defiance of human nature; or rather with an utter ignorance of what it demands. Being engaged at one of these card-parties, I was obliged to go a little before supper-time (as they facetiously call the point of time in which they are taking these shadowy refectations) and the old lady, with a sort of fear shining through the smile of courteous hospitality that beamed in her countenance, begged me to step into the next room and take something before I went out in the cold,—a proposal which lay not in my nature to deny. Indignant at the airy prospect I saw before me, I set to, and, in a trice, despatched the whole meal intended for eleven persons,—fish, flesh, fowl, pastry,—to the sprigs of garnishing parsley, and the last fearful custard that quaked upon the board. I need not describe the consternation when, in due time, the dowagers adjourned from their cards. 'Where was their supper?'—and the servant's answer, Mr ——— had eat it all. That freak, however, jested me out of a good three hundred pounds a-year, which I afterwards was informed, for a certainty, the old lady meant to leave me.

#### SINGULAR RECEPTION OF A CHALLENGE.

THE practice of duelling (like all appeals to the animal instead of the intellectual part of us) appears going out of fashion, and various are the modes by which challenges are evaded or repulsed. It is a delicate point, and requires some address to manage it with credit. Bruce, the traveller, once experienced a singular baulk to his belligerent intentions.

The "Lord of Geesh" (his Abyssinian title) was a tall fellow, both in body and mind, and we may gather from his own narrative, that he was of a domineering disposition. This was natural. He was taller and stronger than is common with men, sanguine, successful in his enterprises, much admired, almost as much (and we believe most unjustly) condemned and ridiculed; he possessed great acuteness, surprising energy, and but little reflection. Such is the very recipe for an overbearing disposition. Look at the portrait of the man,—

"Mr Bruce's stature was six feet four inches; his person was large and well-proportioned, and his strength corresponded with his size and stature. In his youth he possessed much activity, but in the latter part of his life he became corpulent; though, when he chose to exert himself, the effects of time were not perceptible. The colour of his hair was a kind of dark red; his complexion was sanguine; and the

features of his face were elegantly formed. The general tone of his voice was loud, strong, and rather harsh on particular occasions; when dictating to an amanuensis, his articulation was somewhat careless and indistinct. His walk was stately, and his air noble and commanding. He was attentive to his dress, and had a particular art of wearing that of the nations through which he passed in an easy and graceful manner, to which he was indebted for part of his good reception, especially in Abyssinia."

An Italian gentleman, the Marquis di Accoramboni, had married a Scotch lady whom Bruce considered as engaged to himself. The Marquis protested he was ignorant of any such engagement, but refused to say so in writing; so Bruce challenged him. The challenge is singular for its length and grandiloquence. The answer to it puzzles conjecture; we cannot guess whether the Italian is afraid, indifferent, or sarcastic. Most probably he had a national regard for his safety, and an equally national sense of the ridiculous; and so his letter is a salvo for himself and a quiz upon Bruce. He apologizes, and makes his bow with a grimace of exaggerated deference to Bruce's regal bearing. We have retranslated the answer from the Italian, preserving the original idiom as much as possible, to convey a better idea of its spirit and peculiarity:—

#### THE CHALLENGE.

SIR,—Not my heart, but the entreaties of my friends, made me offer you the alternative by the Abbé Grant. It was not for such satisfaction, that, sick and covered with wounds, I have traversed so much land and sea to find you.

An innocent man employed in the service of my country—without provocation or injury from me, you have deprived me of my honour, by violating all the most sacred rights before God and man; and you now refuse to commit to writing what you so willingly confess in words. A man of honour and innocence, Marguiso, knows no such shifts as these; and it will be well for one of us to-day, if you had been as scrupulous in doing an injury as you are in repairing it.

I am your equal, Marquis, in every respect; and God alone can do me justice for the injury which you have done me. Full of innocence, and with a clear conscience, I commit my revenge to him, and draw my sword against you with confidence, inspired by the reflection of having done my duty, and by a sense of the injustice and violence which I have suffered from you without any reason.

At half-past nine, (French reckoning,) I come to your gate in my carriage; if it does not please you, let your own be ready; and let us go together to determine which is the more easy, to injure a man in his absence, or to defend it when he is present.

#### THE ANSWER.

SIGNOR CAVALIER,—When the marriage with Mad. M., now my wife, was in treaty, I was never told that there was a preventive promise to your Lordship, otherwise the affair would not have been so concluded.

In regard to your Lordship's person;—on my honour I have in no manner spoken of it, your person not being known to me. So, if I can serve you, command me; and, with the most profound respect, I sign myself,

Your Lordship's  
Most humble and obliged servant,  
FILIPPO ACCORAMBONI.

Al Signor Janne Bruce.

A Recipe for a Fit of the Gout.—Posidonius discoursing in Pompey's presence was surprised with a violent fit of the gout, which in spite of its opportunity he concealed, pursuing his discourse without any look or action to confess it. Pray tell me what new remedies had this philosopher found against its pain? what sear-cloths, what unguents against this gout?—only the knowledge of things, and the resolution of his mind.—Du Fairfax.

#### CHARLES LAMB.

SUCH of our readers as have seen the following passages in the *Athenaeum*, will pardon, for friendship's sake, our repetition of them in this Journal. We wish that the LONDON JOURNAL should contain whatever has been said, in any quarters, calculated to do honour to our excellent friend, and to increase the desire of the reading public to become acquainted with him.

"We sit down, with unfeigned pain, to put upon record the death of one of our most distinguished friends. Charles Lamb is dead! The fine-hearted Elia—the masterly critic—the quaint, touching, subtle humorist has left us. This time, we sigh to say it, his departure is, indeed, no fiction. He is gone; and with him are gone a world of grave and noble thoughts, innocent jests, delicate fancies. Never again will he 'set the table in a roar'—never again lift us out of the dull common-places of life by his new and pleasant speculations!

"If ever there was a man in whom 'the elements' were delightfully, although strangely mixed—in whom the minor foibles and finer virtues of our nature were bound up together, intimately—inextricably, it was surely he. They were deep-rooted, and twined together, beyond all chance of separation. Yet these foibles were, for the most part, so small, and were grafted so curiously upon a strong, original mind, that we would scarcely have desired them away. They were a sort of fret-work, which let in light, and showed the form and order of his character. 'We knew him, Horatio'—and having known him, it seems idle to say how truly and deeply we deplore his loss. Who, in truth, that had been his intimate, could speak of him but with affection and reverence? His prejudices, which were rather humours than grave opinions,—his weaknesses, which never hurt one human being except himself—may sometimes have been talked of—by strangers. But it was the pride of his friends, that they had opportunities of seeing deeper into his heart, and could feel and avouch for his many virtues. As a man, he was gentle—sincere—benevolent—modest—charitable towards others—beyond most men. In the large sense of the word, he was eminently 'humane.'

"Charles Lamb was born about the year 1774. His family were settled in Lincolnshire, as we learn by his reference to the 'family name' in a pretty sonnet.

'Perhaps some shepherd on Lincolnian plains,  
In manners guileless as his own sweet flocks,  
Received thee first, amid the merry mocks,  
And arch allusions of his fellow swains.'

"In 1782, being then about eight years of age, he was sent to Christ's Hospital, and remained there till 1789. He has left us his 'Recollections' of this place, in two charming papers. These are evidently 'works of love; yet, being written with sincerity, as well as regard, they communicate to the reader a veneration for the ancient school. One wishes, whilst reading them, to muse under the 'mouldering cloisters of the old Grey Friars'—to gaze on the large pictures of Lely and Verrio—to hold colloquy with 'the Grecians'; and, above all, there springs up within us a liking—a sympathy (something between pity and admiration) for the poor Blue-coat boy, toiling for college honours, or wandering homeless through the London streets, a result, perhaps, of more moment to the author, than that of upholding the reputation of his favourite school. In his second paper, on this subject, and where he apostrophizes some of his contemporaries, the following passage has just met our eyes—'Come back into memory, like as thou wert in the day-spring of thy fancies, with hope like a fiery column before thee—the dark pillar not yet turned—Samuel Taylor Coleridge—logician, metaphysician, bard!'—It is thus that he invoked the most famous of his school companions—one whom he always held in close friendship, and who has died—how short a time!—before him.

"It was not long after he quitted Christ's Hospital, we believe, that he obtained the situation of

clerk in the India House. Here he remained for many years—if we are to take him literally, thirty-six years—rising gradually from a small salary to a comfortable yearly stipend; until, in 1825, or thereabouts, he was pensioned off liberally (with 'two thirds of my accustomed salary,' he says) by the Directors.

"The paper in which he has made grateful mention of this, and in which he bids farewell to the 'stately House of Merchants,' and to the partners of his toils—

(Farewell, kind Chairman, Iras, long farewell!) should be hung up in the India House; to remind the merchants of one of their generous deeds; and to tell the young and repining clerk, that a man of rare genius once toiled (as he may do) thirty-six years within those walls.

"During this period, he dwelt in various places; sometimes in London, sometimes in the suburbs. He had (amongst other residences) chambers in the Temple—lodgings in Russell street, Covent Garden (the first floor, over the shop now occupied by Mr Creed the bookseller)—a house at Islington, on the border of the New River—lodgings at Dalston (or Shacklewell)—at Enfield Chase—and, finally, at Edmonton, where he died.

"Mr Lamb had one brother (whom he lost some years ago), and one sister; but he had no other—certainly no other near relations. His brother, Mr John Lamb, of the South-Sea House, was considerably his senior. 'You were figuring in the career of manhood,' he says, addressing his brother,

'When I was yet a little peevish boy.'

"The reader may remember, that it was this brother (otherwise James Elia) who, upon seeing some Eton boys at play, gave vent to his forebodings in that memorable sentence, 'What a pity to think that these fine ingenious lads in a few years will all be changed into frivolous members of Parliament.' His sister, between whom and our friend, there existed a long, deep, and untiring affection—and who is worthy in every respect, to have been the sister of such a man—survives him. They lived together (being both single)—read together—thought together, and crowned the natural tie that linked them to each other, with the truest friendship. He has written down her qualities—some of them at least—in a pleasant essay: she is the *Bridget Elia* of 'Mackery End'; and she is the person, also, to whom one of his early sonnets is addressed, in which he reproaches himself for some little inequality of temper towards her—

'If from my lips some angry accents fell,  
Peevish complaint, or harsh reproof unkind,  
'Twas but the error of a sickly mind.'

"'Thou didst ever show' to me (he proceeds) 'kindest affection,

'Weeping my sorrows with me, who repay  
But ill the mighty debt of love I owe,  
Mary, to thee, my sister and my friend!'

"Mr Lamb was the author of various works in prose and verse; viz. 'Specimens of the English Dramatic Poets,' 1808; 'The Works of Charles Lamb,' (2 vols.) 1818; 'Elia,' 1823; 'The Last Essays of Elia,' 1833; 'The Adventures of Ulysses,' and 'Tales from Shakspeare;' besides which, he made a second gleaming from the Old English Dramatists, under the name of 'The Garrick Papers' (published in Hone's 'Every-Day Book'); assisted his sister in her beautiful little book, called 'Mrs Leicester's School;' and favoured this Paper with a few of the later efforts, or rather sportings of his pen.\*

He died at Edmonton, on the 27th of December, in the sixty-first year of his age. He fell, accidentally, in the road, and having wounded his face considerably, an erysipelas ensued, which put a period to his valuable life."

\* He wrote also some verses and theatrical criticisms in the 'Examiner,' and, we believe, in the 'Times.'

## FINE ARTS.

*Curtis's Botanical Magazine, or Flower-Garden Displayed.* Curtis. No. I.—XCV.

THE illustrations are carefully drawn, and give a just notion of the details of their originals; but from a great want of artistic effect, it would be very difficult to form a true idea of the general appearance of the plants represented. The colouring is clear and lively, nay, of the kind, it is delicate, but by no means matches the originals;—indeed the whole system of print-colouring is defective; in some cases it is perfectly ridiculous. What can be thought of a picture coloured by as many hands as there are colours in it; where each colour has its own painter, and the picture passes from one to another to receive the tints that are to imitate the harmony, richness, and delicacy of nature. We laugh at the country that produces a horn band composed of monotonous individuals;—a chromatic troop; a force amounting to two octaves, that fire off a melody in line;—a band of sharp shooters practicing in a body; but what are we to think of a troop of artists, brush in hand, laying on to one poor engraving, distributing their colours at word of command, furnishing coats of red or blue, or other colour, like army-clothiers, which must do, fit or no fit. An invention that would supersede the ordinary method of colouring each print by hand would be most welcome; some plan by which colours could be multiplied in their proper places and degrees; like the different tones of an engraving. At present, coloured engravings are in the same predicament that books were formerly; each copy is made by hand, as manuscripts were before the invention of printing.\*

We have said the system was to blame for this. While it lasts, therefore, we must judge of coloured prints according to their comparative, rather than their intrinsic merits. The chief use to which they can be put is, to more decidedly enable a reader to identify the original of a verbal description. To this end they must be at least generally correct. Such the plates before us seem to be, due allowance being made for the deficiencies to which we have adverted; and the colours are brighter and cleaner than we commonly get in such publications.

*Chaucer's Canterbury Pilgrims.* By Charles Cowden Clarke. Effingham Wilson.

*Parterre, Nos. I.—V.* Effingham Wilson.

CHAUCER unillustrated by pictures would have been a sad business; and Mr Clarke has too much good taste and *gusto* to have committed so cold-hearted a blunder. So here we have the 'Canterbury Pilgrims,' and their various imaginings shadowed forth in goodly figures by the pleasant hand of Mr Samuel Williams, who handles his wooden blocks with all the love and pride, and skilful practice, as if he were born of a hamadryad, and felt in every grain of the box-wood. A vile scratchiness deforms the neatness of most of the finer wood-cuts now-a-days, which makes us sometimes doubt their superiority over the blunt, rude, heavy-stroked, hard-lined, black-shadowed cuts of old. Freedom from either defect is very rare; but Mr Williams may truly boast, that no cuts of the day are clearer and neater than his, while they have all the vigor and freedom of the old style, with more depth and richness of tone than belongs to either. Mr Williams's defects are, a certain mannerism in the drawing,—a sort of *extra-flow* of line in the limbs,—occasionally a degree of stiffness in the attitudes, and too great a neglect of the expression in the faces; for even in designs as small as his, the expression may be conveyed—though by the slightest touch. Of the pleasing effect, however, that may be produced in wood, Mr Williams's designs in the 'Chaucer,' and the numbers of the 'Parterre,' are excellent specimens; he is less lavish of his lines, more varied in his shadows, his handling is simpler, and he produces a picture in better keeping than we often meet with among engravings of the kind. We have never seen a better bit of colour in wood than the black horse upon which Troilus is riding, nor a better effect of perspective than in the figures in the procession of the Pilgrims.

We must not omit to mention in fit terms of praise a very excellent engraving, by Scriven, at the beginning of the 'Canterbury Pilgrims,' of the traditional portrait of Chaucer.

## MUSIC.

*The Musical Library.* No. X. Charles Knight.

THERE is too great a portion of this month's part devoted to that prosaic style of music which so delighted our forefathers of the glee order. The pieces, however, are good of their kind; there is the after dinner duet, 'Could a Man be Secure,' the pretty glee, 'Adieu to the Village Delights,' and a good madrigal, by Giacomo Gastoldi: we cannot, however, perceive any point of connection between the solid, heavy style of the madrigal, and the airy vivacity of Suckling's words; it reminds us of the organist, who scandalised his rector by playing the people out of church to the tune of 'Cherry Ripe.' Haydn's canonet, 'The Wanderer,' is inferior to his others. The bolero, by Piantanida, with a melody for the voice, is a charming, playful bit of frolic, gay and light-hearted; it might be danced and sung by the tutelar fairy of a jessamine bower; we particularly like the pertinacious little runs backwards and forwards on the words 'Candore' and 'Fiore.' The air, by Gluck, 'Non vi Turbate no,' is worthy of its beautiful and heroic subject; it is sung by Alceste, and expresses her happiness in being allowed to die or her husband.

*There is a Flower, a Ballad.* By W. Bayley. Cooper. Aldridge.

Nor strikingly original, but pleasing, and not difficult. We could have wished that Mr Bayley had been more sparing of his turns; an ornament that cannot be too sparingly used, which ballad-singers seldom require prompting to introduce, from its ease. It is apt to become vulgar in the mouths of ordinary singers.

## TO CORRESPONDENTS.

IN consequence of our new-year's arrangements, of the increase of original matter, and of the re-publication of Mr Hazlitt's Shakspeare criticisms (now out of print), various estimable Correspondents are requested to pardon us if we are compelled to delay the appearance of promised communications, perhaps, ultimately, to omit some of them. We do it with great unwillingness, and would fain, if we could, publish some extra sheets, on purpose to gratify both them and ourselves: but we mentioned the other day that we foresaw we should have difficulties in doing as we wished in this respect; and obstacles crowd upon us. In future we shall take care how we make promises which it pains us not to keep,—far more, we trust, than those to whom they are made.

Certain of our friends will feel, on various accounts, what exceptions are necessarily to be made in the above announcement.—J. W. D. for one (if he is the same who writes to us about Lord Bacon). His verses were put away in some such very safe place that we cannot find them after long search, and must beg another copy,—which we reckon upon, for reasons which will be obvious to his delicacy. Respecting Bacon, he will see what we have felt ourselves obliged to say in our 'Week,' heartily agreeing, as we do—for the most part, with his letter, and hoping to do what he desires.

The signature to the Sonnet, published in our last week's Journal, should have been E. W., and not E. H.

Our cordial Correspondent, ONE OF THE MILLION, is at liberty to keep the book he speaks of, till he and his friends have quite done with it,—to the year's end, if they please. We owe this to others, being great keepers of books ourselves, as some other Correspondents have too much reason to know: but the volumes are safe with us, as they shall see.

By a mistake, the Supplements were omitted in the Index or list of Contents to our first year's volume. The omission will be supplied at the end of the second.

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